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STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

At the 3809th meeting of the Security Council, held on 6 August 1997 in connection with the Council's consideration of the item entitled "The situation in Sierra Leone", the President of the Security Council made the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council recalls the statements of its President of 27 May 1997 (S/PRST/1997/29) and 11 July 1997 (S/PRST/1997/36) following the military coup d'état in Sierra Leone on 25 May 1997. It condemns the overthrow of the democratically elected government of President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah and calls upon the military junta to take immediate steps to bring about the unconditional restoration of that government. The Council remains deeply concerned about the situation in Sierra Leone, which endangers peace, security and stability in the whole region.

"The Security Council underlines the need to implement the Abidjan Agreement which continues to serve as a viable framework for peace, stability, and reconciliation in Sierra Leone.

"The Security Council expresses its appreciation to the Committee of Four Foreign Ministers of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) for their efforts to negotiate with representatives of the military junta from 17 to 18 July and 29 to 30 July 1997 in Abidjan on a peaceful resolution of the crisis, and reiterates its full support for the objectives of this mediation. It deeply regrets the breakdown of these talks, and considers that the responsibility for this failure rests entirely with the military junta who refused to negotiate in good faith.

"The Security Council considers that the military junta's attempt to set conditions for the restoration of the democratically elected government is unacceptable, and calls upon the junta to renounce its declared intention to remain in power and to resume negotiations with the ECOWAS Committee of Four Foreign Ministers without delay.

"The Security Council will, in the absence of a satisfactory response from the military junta, be ready to take appropriate measures with the objective of restoring the democratically elected government of President Kabbah.

"The Security Council remains deeply concerned about the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Sierra Leone, and at the continued looting and commandeering of relief supplies of international agencies. It calls upon the military junta to cease all interference with the delivery of humanitarian assistance to the people of Sierra Leone. The Council condemns the continuing violence and threats of violence by the junta towards the civilian population, foreign nationals and personnel of the ECOWAS monitoring group, and calls for an end to such acts of violence. The Council also expresses its concern at the effects of the continuing influx of refugees into neighbouring countries, in particular Guinea, due to the crisis in Sierra Leone. It calls upon all States and relevant international organizations to provide help to these countries in dealing with this problem.

"The Security Council will remain actively seized of this matter."